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Senate

The Senate was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Monday, January 11, 2016, at 2 p.m.

House of Representatives

FRIDAY, JANUARY 8, 2016

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: God of mercy, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

At the beginning of another day, we pray that Your divine providence guide this Nation and all nations, and every believer, each in his or her way.

In Your spirit enable the Members of this people's House to accomplish Your will by the faithful performance of their responsibilities. Help them to do meaningful work that might give them satisfaction in their sense of purpose.

Strengthen them when it is difficult to accept what cannot be avoided, and to endure with love and resignation the things that could cause them to grow weary or be overcome by despair.

In truth, we do not see the entire picture, nor how we are already united in Your presence among us. Help us all to trust in You, which we claim we already do.

May all that is done be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause one, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to five requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

VIOLATING THE CONSTITUTION IS NOT THE ANSWER

(Mr. MULLIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MULLIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because the Constitution is under attack by a President who has never respected the Second Amendment.

Gun ownership is a fundamental right of law-abiding Americans. The Supreme Court affirmed this right in 2010, and yet this week the President issued new executive actions that are unconstitutional and a clear abuse of power.

There is no question that we must stop senseless acts of violence, but violating the Constitution is not the answer. Criminals are criminals because they break the law. More laws won't keep guns out of criminals' hands.

Let's let law enforcement do their job and enforce the laws that we already have. Let's let law enforcement address the root cause of the violence. Let's look at what is causing it, like radicalism and mental illness.

I have no doubt that the President's latest actions will be challenged in court.

I will do everything in my power to protect Oklahoma's rights and the rights of all Americans.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois). The Chair will remind Members to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

While Members may criticize the President's policies or official actions, they may not engage in personal attacks.

FAIRNESS IN CLASS ACTION LITIGATION ACT

(Ms. SCHAKOWSKY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, last year, Volkswagen was caught defrauding its customers selling vehicles that emitted 40 times more pollution than is allowed by law in its so-called clean diesel models.

VW customers paid extra for vehicles they believed were both cleaner and better performing than other cars on the market, but that is not what they got. They have a right to join class action lawsuits to recoup their losses and hold VW accountable.

But the Fairness in Class Action Litigation Act, which we will consider

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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today, would weaken the ability of those customers to pursue class action claims. In the case of VW, the bill would limit classes to people with the same vehicle model, the same emissions-cheating device, and the same emissions system, even though all clean diesel customers were defrauded in the same way. It would shrink the class sizes and make it easier for VW to defeat or settle claims.

Why would we make it easier for VW to avoid responsibility by making it harder for Americans to pursue justice?

It is shameful that congressional Republicans are trying to do Volkswagen's bidding by weakening the rights their constituents currently have.

I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing this bill.

HONORING DR. GREGORY EASTWOOD

(Mr. KATKO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the distinguished career of Dr. Gregory Eastwood.

I am incredibly privileged to be joined here today by Dr. Eastwood and his wonderful family.

Celebrated throughout our entire region for his commitment to service, Dr. Eastwood first served as president of the State University of New York Upstate Medical University from 1993 until 2006—the longest in the history of the institution and of all sitting presidents on SUNY campuses. Dr. Eastwood returned to the president's seat in October 2013 when the campus was in dire need of his capable leadership.

Dr. Eastwood has served our community for years with distinction, holding leadership roles and partnering with many different organizations in the region.

He advanced an aggressive vision for the SUNY Upstate, which has grown under his leadership through the establishment of the University Health Care Center, the Joslin Diabetes Center, and the Golisano Children's Hospital.

A clinician, scholar, educator, community leader, and author, Dr. Eastwood has had a remarkable career.

Today, I want to thank Dr. Eastwood for his excellence, professionalism, caring presence, and commitment to the SUNY University and to central New York.

Our community is stronger now because of your work, Dr. Eastwood. We will sorely miss you.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, this House unfortunately passed a bill to basically repeal the Affordable Care Act and do away with funding for

Planned Parenthood. I know the President will veto that bill, and I want to thank him in advance.

In Tennessee, 236,000 people signed up for the Affordable Care Act. That is 236,000 people who, if the bill becomes law, will not have health care or will have more expensive health care.

Nationally, 11 million people signed up. Those people will not have it or will have more expensive health care.

If you stop Planned Parenthood, you stop poor people, many of whom are in my district, from getting preventive health care: mammograms, HIV testing, and planned birth control programs.

This was a bad bill against the people of our country, taking away health care from people who need it, otherwise can't afford it, and otherwise wouldn't get it.

Thank you, Mr. President.

IMPROVING SECURITY IN OUR COMMUNITIES

(Mr. JOLLY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JOLLY. Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot of talk this week about improving security in our communities. One way we can do that as a country is to stand shoulder to shoulder with our law enforcement officers. Just as they get our back each day, let us get theirs.

Tomorrow is Law Enforcement Appreciation Day. We can show our appreciation in this House by bringing up and passing legislation I have introduced called the Thin Blue Line Act, now with over 50 cosponsors on both sides of the Capitol. It simply gives prosecutors and judges greater flexibility to impose enhanced penalties on those who do harm to law enforcement officers.

Law enforcement officers each year are subject to over 50,000 assaults on them, 15,000 with injuries, and 150 unfortunately leading to law enforcement deaths.

The Thin Blue Line Act says very simply, if you take the life of a law enforcement officer, be prepared to lose your own.

Mr. Speaker, let's stand with law enforcement officers today and each day in this House.

GUN CONTROL EXECUTIVE ACTIONS

(Mrs. LAWRENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to applaud the President's executive actions to curb gun violence and urge my colleagues to take the action needed to address this deadly plague.

I rise today in honor of more than 300 lives lost to gun violence in Detroit, a city I represent, just in 2015. That is nearly as many lives as we have days in the year.

We have failed to take meaningful action. We must pass legislation to support the President's executive actions.

We have heard a lot of dialogue this week. If you don't like the executive actions, then Congress must rise and let's take the action needed.

We can no longer sit on the sideline and allow this plague and this horrific violence in our country to continue. We must take action now before another day passes and another innocent life is destroyed.

GUN CONTROL EXECUTIVE ORDERS

(Mr. CARTER of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of every American's Second Amendment rights.

The recent announcement by President Obama to unilaterally enact gun control laws once again shows his complete lack of leadership and a complete disregard for Americans' fundamental rights. The President should be working with Congress to enact legislation, not creating executive orders because things don't work out his way.

The fact is that the President's executive actions would not have prevented a single mass shooting over the past several years. One of the main underlying causes of many of these shootings was mental illness, and I will be the first to agree that we should dedicate efforts to address mental illness in this country.

However, directing millions of dollars in new investment for mental health care is not the role of the President. That is the role for Congress.

If our Founding Fathers wanted to restrict the right to bear arms, they would have written it into our Constitution. If our Founding Fathers wanted an executive fiat government, they would have created one.

I call on my colleagues, both Democrats and Republicans, to stand up for this institution and protect what our Founding Fathers fought and died for: a Republic elected by the people, for the people; a country that is not controlled by one man, but by many.

RECOGNIZING FARM FAMILIES OF THE YEAR

(Ms. GRAHAM asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. GRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the Second Congressional District's Farm Families of the Year.

Each year, the Florida Farm Bureau recognizes families across north Florida for their commitment to farming and our community. These families work hard every day to provide food for our tables and, just as importantly, they know farming is more than a job. It is a way of life and a part of our heritage.